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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with aspects of positive family affect in intimate family relationships such as: (1) the nuclear family of orientation, including the child-parent subgroup and the sibling subgroup; (2) the nuclear family of procreation, including the marital subgroup and parent-child subgroup; and (3) the dating relationship. Interpersonal intimacy is defined in terms of cultural norms and values. College level texts dealing with family sociology are analyzed in detail to determine their treatment of family relationship types. The paper traces the passage of an individual's ego through nuclear family relationships using a modified traditional family life cycle. Intimate/affectionate interaction in each of the family subgroups is also discussed. (JAC)

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FAMILY INTIMACY AND AFFECTION: A SOCIOLOGY OF POSITIVE AFFECT

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FAMILY INTIMACY AND AFFECTION: A SOCIOLOGY OF POSITIVE AFFECT

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Studies dealing with aspects of positive family affect (affection, inclination, feeling, disposition, passion) were already flourishing in the USA in the 1920s and 1930s (Kirkpatrick, 1955, "References to Findings on Success in Marriage, 621-624), while only within the past decade have we become fully cognizant of and begun to develop a sociology of negative family affect, that is, family violence, child abuse, and spouse abuse (Gelles and Straus, 1979). Eventually we will develop a general sociology of family affect containing both positive and negative aspects. Before that happens, scholars especially concerned with positive family affect must see if their own house is in order. Is the current sociology of positive family affect adequate? If it is not, what would an adequate, integrated sociology of positive family affect look like?

Each individual throughout his/her life has the possibility of living in seven major intimate* family relationships or groups. At least six are cohabitive: the nuclear family of orientation, including the child-parent subgroup and the sibling subgroup; the nuclear family of procreation, including the marital subgroup, and the parent-child subgroup; and one that is not cohabitive (at least in its early stages) namely the getting together or dating relationship (see "Family Related Events and Family Groupings in Ego's Life", page 3).

Interpersonal intimacy is a concept fundamental to the sociological analysis of relationships and particularly family relationships. Intimacy has a subjective rather than objective character. There is no specific behavior or interaction that has an inherent quality of intimacy. It is not the act or expression itself that is relevant, but the fact that the individuals restrict the act or expression to a specific audience and no one else. A relationship is perceived as intimate if there exists sharing of activity and expression resulting in a sense of knowing the other beyond the level of statuses and roles characteristic of public social life (Macionis, 1978: 113-114). Intimacy can be viewed as interaction in a purely personal sense.

The close, intimate relationship is best understood not as something that "is," but rather as a temporal and developmental process that derives from homoeostatic balances in dialectics among alternative orientations (Raush, 1977: 169). Intimacy occurs over time and is never completely or fully accomplished. It is inclusive and unpredictable and may occur spontaneously. True intimacy requires a playful tolerance--a capacity to suspend judgment, to invest in surprise, pleasure in the

*Intimate - Close in physical or mental contact, especially a close personal relationship; close in association or acquaintance; familiar; close by reason of customary contact; near in respect to place or presence; on terms of licit or illicit sexual intercourse.

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unexpected. Intimate relations expose one to unpredictability, uncertainty, and the risk of losing control and power. Hence, the "gift" of intimacy requires a specific form of passivity--the willingness to hand over control by depending on another and to at least temporarily relinquish control over the other (Douvan, 1977: 22-23). This is no doubt one reason why offspring are prone to perceive their friendships with peers as involving greater intimacy than relationships with their parents (Macionis, 1978: 121-122). For a relationship that is normative, such as the child-parent relationship, is an unequal relationship. Intimacy is then risky since one opens one's self to forces over which one has no/or wishes to have no control. One solely concerned with control and power cannot involve himself/herself in a genuinely intimate relationship. Marriage partners are expected to be equals in intimacy; parents and children are not. The parent is in control and holds power and authority. An individual in a position of authority is a representative of a normative structure. This structure may take presidence over his/her personal character, however loving, thus inhibiting interpersonal intimacy (Macionis, 1978: 118).

The human capacity for intimacy and affection is not problematic. But that is not to say that the desire, the opportunity, or the social approval is always present. One need only think about relationships between a child and an adult stranger or an intimate relationship between two homosexuals, to realize that desire, opportunity and social approval are not always present.

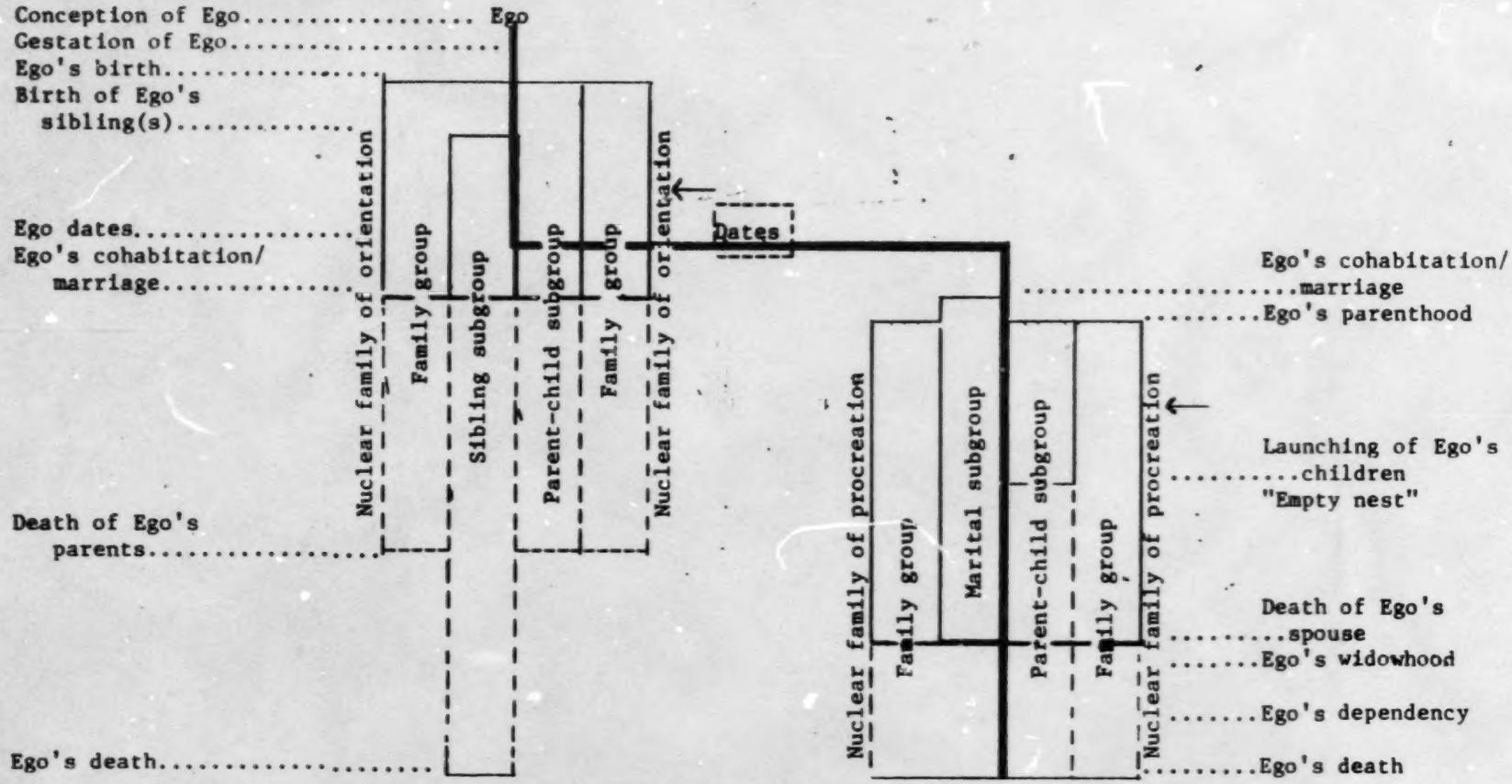
In other words, the values and norms of a culture exert strong influence on behavior. Although human genetic capacity exists for intimacy, tenderness, affection, kindness, it is socialization and experience that determine whether a particular relationship calls for the expression of these attributes, as well as whether or not an individual will acquire characteristics that lead to a tendency to behave pro-socially (Staub, 1979: 5). Empathy, the vicarious experience of another person's emotion, appears to provide an important motivation to behave positively, and valuing other people and their welfare is likely to be a precondition for the arousal of empathy (Staub, 1979: 12).

Within human societies, it is expected that some relationships will be intimate and affectionate--close friendships and marriages for instance. In America, it has been considered ideal if two persons who date and marry each other are close friends as well as spouses--a double advantage.

But what is the nature and extent of positive affect, of intimacy and affection in family subgroups other than dating and marriage, that is, in child-parent relationships and in sibling relationships? In other words, to what extent are all family subgroups accepted by society as intimate and affectionate as are dating and marriage?

Perhaps no one would deny the social approval of child-parent relationships as intimate and affectionate--for instance, mother cuddling and nursing her new-born baby or a child experiencing the thrill of being

FAMILY-RELATED EVENTS AND FAMILY GROUPINGS IN EGO'S LIFE



No marital subgrouping appears within the nuclear family of orientation since Ego is not a member of that family subgroup

← = Point of greatest cohabitive intimacy for Ego

_____ = Cohabitiive family grouping

----- = Dispersed family grouping

tossed in the air, caught, and cuddled by one of its parents. But what is meant by the child-parent intimacy and affection in such situations is problematic. Also in sibling relationships, brothers and sisters who are kind to each other, fond of each other, play together without undue rivalry, jealousy, and quarreling, and defend each other if attacked by others are admired. But again, what is meant by intimate and affectionate sibling relationships is problematic.

It is quite transparent that there are differences in both the kind and degree of intimacy and affection that society approves of in the various family subgroups. The intense erotic and sexual intimacy approved of for married couples is not approved of in child-parent or sibling relationships, for example.

At present we do not have an integrated sociology of positive family affect that applies to all family subgroupings. Yet there is an element of intimacy/affectionality and some type of affective structural pattern (Lowman, 1980: 130) that runs through, affects, and is important in interaction in the family as a whole and in all of its subgroupings. The family's very size, age and sex composition, and unique personal and interpersonal functions make it almost inevitable that, if the family functions well, it is an intimate unit (Martinson, 1970: 109-160). Therefore, for the purpose of this paper, we assume that developing an integrated sociology of family intimacy and affection is a valid undertaking, would have utility for sociological description and analysis of the family and for the eventual development of a general sociology of family affect, as well as being of practical utility for the family practioner.

One way to begin an integrated sociology of positive family affect (intimacy and affection) is to ask how family sociologists have treated the subjects of family intimacy and affection to date. In seeking an answer to this question, I did a content analysis of a number of college-level textbooks written by family sociologists (Martinson, 1980b). The focus of the texts varies, of course. Some deal hardly at all with dating relationships as part of a family system, for instance, while others give it extensive treatment (Table I). Some would argue that dating relationships are not strictly family. More arresting is the lack of attention given to sibling relationships, clearly relationships within rather than prior to or tangential to the family (Table I). Only one of the eighteen textbooks (see "Textbooks", p. 5) devotes a major section to siblings and sibling relationships, but no consideration is given to brother-sister incest, generally considered the major intimacy problem area in brother-sister relationships (Table II). In textbooks that are illustrated, most of the pictures of intimate activity are also of adult activity, not child-parent or sibling activity (Table III).

Not only are some family relationship types (sibling relations, for instance) given little or no attention in the family sociology textbooks, but also the amount of positive and negative affect reported for the various family relationships differed markedly. In a thorough

TEXTBOOKS

1. Adams, Bert N., THE FAMILY, 1980.

2. Aldous, Joan, FAMILY CAREERS, 1978.

3. Belkin, Gary S., and Norman Goodman, MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS, 1980.

4. Bell, Robert R., MARRIAGE AND FAMILY INTERACTION, 1979.

5. Boalt, Gunnar, FAMILY AND MARRIAGE, 1965.

6. Broderick, Carlfred, MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY, 1979.

7. Eshleman, J. Ross, THE FAMILY, 1978.

8. Gagnon, John H., and Cathy S. Greenblat, LIFE DESIGNS: INDIVIDUALS, MARRIAGES, AND FAMILIES, 1978.

9. Karlsson, Georg, and Jan Trost, FAMILJEN I SAMHÄLLET, 1965.

10. Kelly, Robert K., COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE, AND THE FAMILY, 1979.

11. Knox, David, EXPLORING MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY, 1979.

12. Leslie, Gerald R., THE FAMILY IN SOCIAL CONTEXT, 1979.

13. Linner, Birgitta, and Barbro Westholm, FAMILJ OCH SAMELEVNAD, 1968.

14. Nass, Gilbert D., MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY, 1978.

15. Reiss, Ira, FAMILY SYSTEMS IN AMERICA, 1980.

16. Rice, F. Philip, MARRIAGE AND PARENTHOOD, 1979.

17. Schulz, David A., and Stanley F. Rodgers, MARRIAGE, THE FAMILY AND PERSONAL FULFILLMENT, 1980.

18. Trost, Jan. FAMILJEKUNSKAP, 1972.

Table I

Chapters or Sections of Chapters Dealing with Relations and Interaction in Four Family Subgroups

	Dating/Courting		Spouses		Parent/Child		Siblings	
Author(s)/Editors(s)	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Adams	2	13	3	20	10	67	0	
Aldous	1	7	7	47	6	40	1	7
Belkin-Goodman	4	27	5	33	6	40	0	
Bell	4	22	6	33	8	44	0	
Boalt	4	33	3	25	5	42	0	
Broderick	4	29	7	50	3	21	0	
Eshleman	3	16	5	26	11	58	0	
Gagnon-Greenblat	3	30	4	40	3	30	0	
Karlsson-Trost	2	20	2	20	6	60	0	
Kelly	6	29	8	38	7	33	0	
Knox	5	33	6	40	4	27	0	
Leslie	2	11	6	28	9	61	0	
Linnér-Westholm	5	31	3	19	8	50	0	
Nass	2	12	6	35	9	53	0	
Reiss	6	38	5	31	5	31	0	
Rice	5	28	9	50	4	22	0	
Schulz-Rodgers	6	40	5	33	4	27	0	
Trost	1	11	2	22	6	67	0	

Table II

Pages or Portions of Pages Dealing with Sibling Relations and Interaction

Author(s)/Editor(s)	Non-incestuous N	Incestuous N
Adams	1	8
Aldous	18	0
Belkin-Goodman	8	12
Bell	3	0
Boalt	0	0
Broderick	0	3
Eshleman	0	7
Gagnon-Greenblat	2	0
Karlsson-Trost	0	0
Kelly	4	0
Knox	1	4
Leslie	0	17
Linnér-Westholm	0	0
Nass	1	4
Reiss	2	2
Rice	0	0
Schulz-Rodgers	0	0
Trost	No index	

Table III

Illustrations

Author(s)/Editor(s)	N	Adult-adult		Adult-child		Child-child	
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Adams	24	12	50	10	42	2	8
Aldous	19	10	53	8	42	1	5
Belkin-Goodman	77	51	66	24	31	2	3
Bell	29	20	69	8	28	1	3
Boalt	0						
Broderick	100	70	70	22	22	8	8
Eshleman	40	23	58	14	35	3	8
Gagnon-Greenblat	135	100	74	27	20	8	6
Karlsson-Trost	0						
Kelly	84	56	67	25	30	3	4
Linnèr-Westholm	79	39	49	28	35	12	15
Knox	108	77	71	26	24	5	5
Leslie	31	15	48	12	39	4	13
Nass	94	52	55	32	34	10	11
Reiss	52	31	60	15	29	6	12
Rice	29	17	59	9	31	3	10
Schulz-Rodgers	72	54	75	17	24	1	1
Trost	28	13	46	10	36	5	18

Table IV
Positive and Negative Words and Phrases Referring to Relationships and Interaction

						Dating-Courting				Spouses				Parent-Child				Child-Child			
	total	total (pos)		total (neg)		positive		negative		positive		negative		positive		negative		positive		negative	
Text	N	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
24	1687	872	52	815	48	527	70	225	30	165	37	276	63	177	36	311	64	3	50	3	50
311	131	56	43	75	57	5	50	5	50	13	46	15	59	38	41	54	59	0		1	100
412	1211	569	47	642	53	11	79	3	21	85	38	139	62	381	47	432	53	92	57.5	68	42.5
593	1221	658	54	563	46	286	89	35	11	297	48	326	52	72	27	199	73	3	50	3	50
715	183	61	33	122	67	41	49	42	51	15	23	50	77	5	14	30	86	0		0	
1118	844	315	37	529	63	86	50	85	50	199	34	380	66	30	33	62	67	0		2	100
1814	1251	652	52	599	48	243	78	67	22	320	50	323	50	83	29	203	71	6	35	11	65

content analysis of seven of the textbooks, the number of positive and negative words and phrases used in describing and analyzing interaction in the various family subgroups were counted. References to child-parent interaction were more commonly negative than positive, that is, limited primarily to the negative effects of children on marital relations and on the job or career intentions of the parents (Table IV). The relationship receiving the most positive references was the dating/courting relationship. In sum, sociologists/textbook writers almost completely ignore sibling relationships, and speak favorably about intimate interaction in dating and in marriage. More important for our purposes, I found no integrating concepts or theories of positive (or negative) family affect in the textbooks.

In fairness to the textbook writers, it must be pointed out that most research on child-parent relationships deals with child care, socialization, and discipline, not with interactive aspects of the relationships. Most of the research on siblings deals with sibling birth order. Secondly, there has been almost no research on the interaction of young siblings, that is, covering the years while they are still at home in the family and before they have gorwn up and moved away (Hartup, 1978; Hill, 1981).

We are left with the question, what would an integrated sociology of family intimacy and affection in all the major family subgroupings look like? Is it unrealistic to talk of a sociology of family intimacy and affection in general? Is there sociological theory that would encompass a general theory of positive family affect or that could at least be utilized to explain intimate and affectional differences in different family subgroups?

To focus on family intimacy and affection is not to focus on an esoteric subject. Among basic needs of human is the need for intimacy and the needs for affection. These are not directly biological needs of human beeings, yet the human will not thrive, not even survive, without them (Etzioni, 1968), and one of the specific goals of the family is to provide affect (Kantor and Lahr, 1976: 37). The family is a critically important social grouping since it nurtures and socializes the neonate and, in part at least, maintains, motivates, and nurtures its child and adult members alike.

One schematic design for relating and making comparisons between intimate and affectionate relations in the family and in the different family subgroups is to trace Ego's passage from birth to adulthood through the various family subgroupings. In this paper we trace Ego's passage mainly through the first family subgroupings, namely the nuclear family orientation, including infant-parent, child-parent, and sibling relations. The reason for this restriction is lack of time and space and the fact that interaction in these family subgroupings has been most neglected by family sociologists. We will use a modified traditional family life cycle, that is a family life cycle that begins with the birth rather than with the marriage of Ego. In order to consider the major types of nuclear family subgroupings, our Ego will

be the first child born into a two-parent nuclear family of orientation and will have at least one sibling. This is a constructed type. We use it in full recognition that many families are headed by one rather than by two parents and that some children do not have siblings.

Ego is born into a particular, unique nuclear family, for each family is unique. Individual families within a society have their own family culture, that is they hold stable collective beliefs, and dynamics in the family have a strong emotional component that can either interfere with or facilitate performance. A family's behavior is special because it is built on years of shared experience, reaction, and expectation, according to Reiss' theory of shared constructs (Blehar, 1979: 172). Or we might say that it is the redundancy of interactive styles that gives a family system its own individual structure (Raush, Greif, and Nugent, 1979: 468-471). So Ego is born not just into a nuclear family but into one type of nuclear family. Structural theory asserts that social groupings differ in respect to their typical levels of intimacy and affection and the resources, patterns, and roles at their disposal to express intimacy and affection.

Secondly, the ongoing family is enmeshed in a culture and society that gives messages--some clear, some less clear--as to how and what kinds of intimacy and affection it shall provide, support, and manage. The family takes these messages, these societal norms, and translates them into infant- and child-care practices. For instance, American society's messages to the family are apt to be messages containing a degree of violence, for there is evidence that America is a violent society and that "violence is built into every structure of society and the family system itself" (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980: 44).

But, there is a culture of affection which is part of general American culture as well. This is a part of the plurality of American culture. Concern for the "well-being of children is a basic American value" (Roberts, 1978: 40). Culture-of-affection theory (a social-learning theory) views affection as a learned response. The learning comes about as a result of membership in a cultural or subcultural group that reflects a culture-of-affection. This in turn is reflected in the socialization of children into these values and norms. So, in applying culture-of-affection theory to the family, we view the family as influenced by the culture-of-affection and as a training ground in affection. Family members learn that affection is acceptable. Positive states and positive affect are part of the culture of affection. Positive state, postures of gratification or pleasure which people are in that have no explicit interpersonal component, are fostered in American society. Positive affect, states that involve coming closer to another person or persons by giving or receiving, liking or being liked, or being with other persons, is also fostered in a culture of affection (Mishler and Waxler, 1968: 85-186). In sum, the cultural messages to the family regarding affect are not clear since they signal support for and the utility of both affection and violence in intimate family interaction.

Studies of families in which there is a schizophrenic patient (schizophrenic families) have been compared on affect with control groups of families without a schizophrenic patient (normal families).

This is a crude dichotomization, but it does lend support to the plurality in our culture of affective norms and behavior patterns. Ego could be born into a normal or a schizophrenic family. The kind and extent of affect expressed in the two types of families is different. Normal families are more positive and expressive in their affective interaction. Schizophrenic families defend against warmth and closeness. The expressiveness of the normal family is apparent in the degree to which members support each other, protect each other, laugh together, and seem to enjoy each other's company (Mishler and Waxler, 1968: 219). Humor, along with creativity, is important (Raush, 1979: 473). Normal families have lower rates of negative affect of all kinds and particularly of antagonism; not that disagreement, anger, and personal attacks do not occur in normal families. They do. But the quality of disagreement in normal families tends to be direct yet benign (Mishler and Waxler, 1968: 219-223). The higher level of expressiveness in normal families is associated with disproportionately more positive feelings (Mishler and Waxler, 1968: 93-102).

Within the category normal families, Reiss (Blehar, 1979) isolated four types of normal families. Environment-sensitive families when confronted with a problem in a problem-solving situation tend to see the problem as "out there" in the environment. They are oriented toward the external world. Family members work well together. Each pays attention to the other's ideas and evaluates them objectively as yet another piece of information about the problem. They are able to attend to outside nuances. Because the problem is not a personal affront or threat, they focus their attention on it effectively.

In achievement-sensitive families each family member sees the problem situation as an arena for his/her own self expression. Each person is oriented toward the best possible solution, however, and family members do pay attention to what the others say. But the individual family members do not get together or arrive at one or similar answers. They may not appear to be a close-knit family, yet members of achievement-sensitive families often select each other on sociometric scales as "most liked" and rarely pick each other as "least liked" (Reiss, n.d.: 9-54).

Reiss' environment-sensitive and achievement-sensitive families appear to have much in common with Kantor and Lehr's (1976: 154) open-type family. Members of the open-type family seek an intimacy and nurturance that is adapted. Emotions are overtly expressed, and the family seeks out new emotional experiences. Its emotional mandate is to share and not withhold whatever is being felt. Ecstasy is felt to be a profoundly authentic experience. Responsiveness, authenticity, and the legitimacy of emotional latitude are the open system's major affective ideals.

The other two of Reiss' family types appear problematic in so far as intimacy and affection are concerned, though they are classified

as normal families. Reiss' consensus-sensitive families fall in this category. Family members communicate with each other, but the point of the exchange in problem solving appears to be to achieve a united front. Conflict avoidance is a primary goal and relatively little attention is given to the objective quality of solutions (Blehar, 1979: 176). This type of family appears to be "traditional". What the family's norms convey to family members is a strong sense of family identity but within a consensus-seeking rather than a free system of values.

A second affectively-problematic family type is Reiss' interpersonal distance-sensitive family. In problem solving this type of family member uses the test situation as an arena for displaying individual prowess and superiority over other family members. These family members do not work well together. Each person wants to arrive at his/her solution regardless of how valuable information from the others might be (Blehar, 1979: 176). Members are left with a sense of estrangement, both from the environment and from each other--hardly a proper atmosphere for intimate-affectionate relations (Blehar, 1979: 178). In neither of the last two types of families can orientation be categorized as pro-social.

The consensus-sensitive family appears to have similarities to Kantor and Lehr's closed-type family (1976: 145). So far as intimacy and affection is concerned, the closed-type family strives after an intimacy which is stable. Affection is characterized by earnestness and sincerity rather than passion. Loyalties are honored. Fidelity is maintained. Member's relation with one another are festidious and sensible. The emotional or affective mandate is to care deeply, but to be composed. Durability, fidelity and sincerity characterize the closed system's ideals in the affect dimension.

A family committed to a culture-of-affection will try to foster cheerfulness, emotional cohesion, physical pleasure, amusement, loyalty, or generosity--what are called themes in systems theory. These themes are never exclusively actional; the family is also constantly engrossed in control--the task of regulating traffic in accordance with its themes and goals (Kantor and Lehr, 1976, 57-64). Ego stands a chance of being born into a schizophrenic family or one of the types of normal families. The collective beliefs and shared constructs of each will affect interaction in the family subgroups and will affect Ego's personality as well.

In sum, research-based examples of different family intimacy and affection types though needing refinement are adequate to demonstrate that within one and the same society, Ego may enter families with quite varied intimacy/affective themes, goals, structures, and role performances.

Communication theory is a valuable complement to general interaction theory when dealing with interaction of members within the family. Current communication theory applied to family living sees

family interaction as a matter of the adjustment of the individual's internal needs to fixed family circumstances--the family culture--and as relationships between family members--how they evolve, how they are stabilized, how they change. Families rather than individuals have come to be viewed as the significant units for analysis. Behavior of individual family members is directly related to the structure of the family as a unit and to the maintenance of the family as a system. The texture of the structure and its maintenance are in the communications of members with one another. Change in individual behavior patterns requires change in patterns of interpersonal communication (Raush, Grief, and Nugent, 1979: 468-471). The messages between family members in an interchange involves more than one communication channel. A message conveys both a content, given by the word; but it is also a statement of relationship (Watzalawick, Beaven, and Jackson, 1967).

Communication theory as an approach to families is primarily concerned with relationships among participants. This interest directs family researchers toward command rather than report aspects of communications. There is an emphasis on what partners or family members are "doing" to one another (or how they are relating to one another) rather than to the content of their communications. Inferences as to relationships are often drawn from who interrupts who and how much, who talks most, who talks first, who talks last, and from the discrepancies in content communication (Raush, et al, 1979: 471-473).

Nuclear Family Subgroups

In each family subgrouping intimate and affectionate activity is enacted that is unique. Each subgroup is at least semi-closed to other subgroups operating within the same household (Schvaneveldt and Ihinger, 1979: 457-458). For example, children have access to some parts of parental intimate/affectional interaction but are barred from participation in other spousal activities, such as sexual intimacy and especially sexual intercourse.

There is not a family that does not experience some competition of goals and purposes among its subgroups as well as between each subgroup and the nuclear family as a whole. An enabling family is one in which distance between family subgroups is maintained so that no one subgroup is consistently and systematically denied actualization of its functions and goals and in which no one family subgroup is singled out for repeated sacrifice to the whole (Kantor and Lehr, 1976: 231-232).

Intimate/Affectionate Interaction in the Infant-Parent Family Subgroup.

Ego at birth enters as an interacting member of a unique nuclear family of orientation but enters as an almost totally dependent neonate (a newborn infant, especially one that is less than a month old) interacting at first mainly in a neonate-mother relationship. If a neonate is not fed, kept warm and dry, stimulated and soothed emotionally, protected and cared for totally, it will die.

We make a distinction between the infant-parent subgroup (beginning with Ego as a neonate) and the child-parent subgroup which begins when Ego is approximately two years old. The reason for the distinction is because of marked differences in the nature and function of offspring-parent intimate/affectional interaction in these first two of Ego's family life stages and in the ways in which society differently sanctions offspring-parent intimacy in these two stages.

The nature of Ego's interaction with his/her parents will depend in large part on how receptive the parents are to Ego's birth and how pleased they are with the prospects of the parental role. Recent surveys do not support popular assumptions that most parents are dissatisfied with parenthood (Chilman, 1980). In the Cleveland study, parents when asked which aspects of their lives were most important in providing satisfaction responded that children were "very important" (95%), a higher percentage than from marriage (92%), love (83%), or sex (67%) (Roberts et al, 1978: 32-33). In this paper, since we are focusing on positive affect, since there has been no national survey on the extent and kind of intimacy and affection in the family (as there has been for family violence), and since survey data support the conclusion, we assume Ego is well received in a normal family supportive of a family culture of affection. (We are not unmindful that most American parents slap or spank their children and that younger children are more likely to be struck and to be struck more frequently than are older children. Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980.) Parents are expected to be committed to their offspring.

Commitment is an important concept in the theory of intimacy. Commitment is most often thought of as a personal variable and is most often seen from a personal perspective; that is, it is the individual who commits himself/herself, but we may also look at commitment from a societal context as the powerful forces that social institutions and social structuring of space and time exert on people's involvement and commitment. Intimacy may be seen as a social demand, as a social statement of the opportunities and restrictions available to us, and as a call for particular forms of commitment. Intimacy that deviates from the general societal orientation must seek new contexts for its expression. Intimacy fits with and is defined by what is demanded by the social order. We see relationships, and specifically commitments, as part of the social structure of our lives. Whether we identify with, comply with, or resist the context set by our society, that context is an orientation from which we and others view and judge our experiences. The process by which interpersonal experiences are transformed to a societal orientation is called socialization; the process by which interpersonal experience is transformed to a personal orientation is called identity formation (Raush, 1977: 169-171).

What does Ego bring to the infant-parent relationship--what interactive capacities? The neonate's resources are meager indeed, if we apply some of the empirically-supported propositions of symbolic interaction theory, for instance:

> The greater the number of cultural symbols in an individual's repertoire, the gre ter the interpersonal competence (Burr, et al, 1979: 62).

> The greater the ability to take the role of the other, the greater the interpersonal competence.
>
> The greater the repertoire of role skills, the greater the interpersonal competency.
>
> The more complex the conceptions about the self, the greater the interpersonal competency (Burr, et al, 1979: 63).

On all of these the neonate scores near the zero point. In other words, the neonate engages in infant-parent interaction, but it is not symbolic interaction. Ego's motivations are not social; they are physiological/psychological givens. Freud (1938) traced all sorts of motivational forces back to primitive drives which he considered to be their etiological and energetic origin. Such a psychobiological perspective on intimacy sees the individual as having drives or instinct for intimacy which is at bottom biologically given (Freud, 1938; Harlow and Zimmerman, 1959; Spitz and Wolf, 1946; Ferrier, 1964; Bowlby, 1958; Davis, 1973). Wrong (1961), Reinharz (1979) and others, have accused sociologists of ignoring or overlooking these inherent aspects of human personality and utilizing an "over-socialized" concept of man's interactive abilities. But it is perhaps more a matter of disproportionate de-emphasis on inherent phenomena that sociologists are "guilty" of, for the presence of at least the energy and the capacity for touching, sucking, tumescence, and even orgasm cannot be denied (Kinsey, 1948; Martinson, 1973). A sociologist's interactionist perspective, while recognizing these innate capacities and energy levels, concentrates on the symbolic side of the subjective self--what do intimacy and affection mean to Ego, how are the meanings built up, why do they persist, how are they modified, and what are the consequences of the meanings in interpersonal encounters (Burr, et al, 1979, Volume 2). So, in the beginning, Ego as neonate has his/her first family experience in the enveloping arms of a parent, is at "zero point" so far as symbolic meanings are concerned, and begins with energy and some inherent predispositions, capacities, and needs.

Building on these inherent physiological/psychological givens, human beings are created through intimate physical, psychic and social interaction both with their general environment and particularly with other human beings. Physical movement of the offspring (both as fetus within the womb and later as neonate), sucking at the mother's breast, and face-to-face interaction are critical for full human development. Not only do they need it; they also elicit it. The empirical evidence for this is abundant, irrefutable, readily available, and need not be reviewed here.

The neonates' predispositions to engage in intimate interaction vary in intensity. For example, some neonates are more predisposed to "cuddle" than are others (Schaffer and Emerson, 1961; Will, 1978), and these infant predispositions influence the nature of infant-parent

interaction. Will (1978) comparing the neonate-mother interaction of three-day to one-month-old neonates--16 high-and 16 low-cuddly infants --found differences in the mother's handling of the infant to be a function of the infant's cuddliness.

Most interaction in most social systems in psychic, but the family is unique in that interaction of family members with each other is both psychic and physical, that is, there is intense physical as well as affective involvement (Lennard and Bernstein, 1969). In the family's child-care responsibilities, neonate care that is not physically intimate is inconceivable.

Most activities associated with nurturance and hygienic care of neonates is intimate, and sensual as well, in that it involves contact with sensitive organs--lips, mouth, anus, and genitals--which can produce in the infant a physiological response of a sensual/sexual nature. These activities include breast feeding, diapering, and bathing. Such activities are likely not purposely sensual/sexual on the parent's part, and mothers have been known to cease breast feeding in the fear that the experience may prove to be too sexually stimulating and satisfying both for themselves and for the infant (Martinson, 1973).

Such intimacy is not restricted to nurturance and hygenic care. In "optimal" circumstances, the infant has interactive experiences with parents that are warm and tender. Hugging, kissing, and other physical closeness can be sensual/sexual in a nurturant and growth-promoting way (Landauer and Whiting, 1964). It is generally assumed that the integration of an infant into warm and loving aspects of family life is conducive to the development of a healthy pride in self and in parents (Rosenfeld, 1976: 231). Some go even further and hypothesize that such affection contributes to the infant's future ability as an adult to be warm and sensual in marital and parenting relationships. There is also evidence that exclusion from intimate-affectional contacts, sometimes called maternal deprivation or sexual neglect (Rosenfeld, 1976: 232) stunts the development and expressiveness of children.

Rossi (Levinger, 1977) suggests that we distinguish among degrees of intimacy in interpersonal relations according to the sense organs that are involved. Her continuum begins with ear and eye contact between two persons. The ear and the eye can operate at a distance, and the contact can range from casual to the very close. Sensual stimulation includes the senses of scent, touch, and taste, as in the activities of the nose, hands, and lips. These modes of sensory interaction require physical nearness; furthermore, these latter forms of exchange are particularly suited to interaction in pairs (dyads) rather than in larger groups. Most intimate on Rossi's continuum is contact involving sexual organs--erotic contact of mouth, tongue, breasts, and genitals.

Using these criteria of sense organs involved, infant-mother intimacy is extremely close involving as it does ears, eyes, nose, hands, mouth, lips, tongue, and breasts through scent, touch, taste, and some (perhaps unintentional) erotic contact. Only genital contact is normally excluded from intimate infant-mother interchange. Infant-mother interchange is, therefore, conducive to high emotional access as well.

Interactive opportunity (referred to as time at risk when speaking of family violence) is important in the development of interactive intimacy and is both intimate and prolonged particularly if the infant is fed through suckling at the mother's breast and if the mother has exclusive care of the infant.

Some interactionists focus on the physical aspects of interactive motivation or organismic involvement, meaning the proportion of a person's concentration, efforts, or engrossment that a role demands or stimulates (Burr, et al, 1979: 56, Volume 2). At the high end of the continuum of orgasmic involvement one finds enactment that calls for great degrees of effort, that is, muscular exertion or participation of the viscera through autonomic nervous system activity or both. Intimate/sensate relationships can become so intense, consuming, and concentrated as to appear almost hypnotic (sometimes referred to as hypnotic role taking)(Burr, et al, 1979: 57, Volume 2). Sucking at the breast for the infant and coitus for the adult fall in this category. Ecstacy is another term used by interactionists to characterize activity that is intense and perhaps erotic. In an ecstatic state a person is so "carried away" by the interaction that there is usually a suspension of voluntary action. Such ecstatic intimate experience occurs at least on occasion for both suckling infant and mother and may be orgasmic for both. Such is the case with adult coital partners as well.

Simmel (Wolf, 1950) characterized the dyad, the two-person group, as the true locus of intimacy. Its members are not distracted by the presence of others. Again, the infant cuddled and sucking at the mother's breast and the adult couple engaged in coitus are family relationships characteristic of exclusively dyadic interaction.

As participants engage in dyadic interaction with its high degree of emotional access, they are likely to develop more pronounced feelings toward one another and to become jointly engaged in even more activities (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 5759). They become developmental dyads. If one member (the infant, for instance) undergoes developmental change, the other (the parent) is also likely to do so--hence not only reciprocal interaction but reciprocal development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979: 65-66).

Because of Ego's dependence as an infant, most of his/her family experience is in family dyads and most commonly in an infant-mother dyad.

In infant-parent interaction communication must be analogic (nonverbal, indicating posture, gesture, facial expression, voice inflection) because one of the participants (neonate) is incapable of digital language (verbal, including words, signs, or symbols which carry meaning arbitrarily)(Raush, Greif, and Nugent, 1979: 472). In fact, neonate-parent communication will be even more random than analogic on the neonate's part and largely analogic on the parent's part because of the neonate's inability to translate symbols into precise thought and action. Even the random and accidental gestures of the neonate may be interpreted as analogic communication by the parent. The parent

reacts accordingly and helps to pattern the neonates first random gestures into intimate and affectional responses. The neonate can be said to acquire communicative gestures in four ways: genetic inheritance, personal discovery, social absorption, and deliberate learning (Morris, 1977). The continual non-verbal and verbal "statements" that parent and neonate make to each other transform the two individuals into interlinked intimates (Davis, 1973: 91).

Messages implicitly conveying relationships can be verbal ("I love you") or non-verbal--an embrace.

Attribution theory deals with processes by which a person infers another person's intentions from his/her behavior (Kelly, 1977). In infant-parent interaction the parent observes an action or an emotional state in the infant and makes a judgment as to the cause or intent behind the event. The parent is apt to attribute the infant's behavior to some ability or intention rather than as having external cause, and the parent responds with behavior consistent with the parent's interpretation. As the infant in turn internalizes the parent's responses and reacts to them, true communication begins to develop and the interaction is in fact symbolic interaction.

Infants continue to live in a physical environment even as they acquire a symbolic environment. The physical environment includes Ego's own body. Humans are stimulated to engage in autoerotic and interpersonal activities in response to characteristics, needs, and energy levels of their own bodies. This is not to say, of course, that human behavior is influenced more by inherent capacities than by ideas --except for infants. Interaction theorists assume that humans do not respond to the environment as physically given, but neonates do. Sucking, touching, face-to-face contact, genital tumescence and lubrication, and even orgasm are all apparent at some times in infant-parent interaction.

Roberts et al (1978: 14) found in the Cleveland study that most mothers and fathers were thoroughly relaxed about self-stimulation (infants touching their genitals, for instance) and many parents remarked that their offspring (girls and boys) played with their genitals often when they were infants. None of them seemed upset by it; in fact, such self-exploration was most often described as "natural." But not all infant sensate experiences in self stimulation or stimulation in intimate interaction with a parent is treated with equinimity by parent or by society. In fact, in the procedures involved in child rearing, society relies precisely on those infant-parent motives and activities which, at the same time, society does not approve of. Current developmental theory on the infant-parent attachment bond describes a built-in conflict between conditions regarded as necessary for successful maturation and damaging side effects which are difficult to disassociate from the beneficial ones (Rorty, 1972). If one looks at infant care practices, and the folk wisdom associated with them--especially the sort of folk wisdom that has been influenced by psychoanalytic theory--one sees recommendations made to parents about the care of infants that should be expected to lead them to express and enact what Freud would describe as incestuous desires (Parsons, 1954). Neonate/infants are supposed to be stimulated; they are to be cuddled and fondled; they are

to be aroused. The relationship is often described in highly erotic terms. Developmental studies suggest that infants' emotional maturation depends upon such physical stimulation. Intimacy even at ecstatic and hypnotic levels is possible in erotically-charged infant-parent encounters. Clinical studies credit insufficient physical contact between infant and parent as the cause of later inability to form attachments. It is suggested that if mature sexual identification is to develop, parental attachments must evoke corresponding responses from the infant. On the other hand, case studies of neurotic patients attest to the disastrous consequences of parental overstimulation and continued arousal, suggesting that the enactment of diffuse sexual actions that might bind dependency patterns are harmful.

There are reasons physical, psychological, and social why the relationship between infant and parent may become eroticized. The adult is a complex unit of inherent capacities, personal dispositions, and the internalization of various norms, values, and roles. The infant, on the other hand, has the physiological capacity for erotic response (Freud, 1938; Kinsey, 1948) and does become sexually aroused (physiologically at least) in such encounters (Kinsey, 1948; Martinson, 1973; Constantine, 1980), lacks symbols for understanding or dealing with the arousal, and appears to have no natural revulsion against erotic intimacy (Bagley, 1969). It is not so difficult to see that the blurring of their personal boundaries might lead infant and parent to incestuous behavior.

In speaking of interaction, we have emphasized predispositions in the personality of the infant because the infant possesses none of the necessary interactive symbols. Recently attention has been given to initial responses of parents to the neonate. Lozoff et al (1977) reviewed six separate studies involving over five hundred primaparous women in four countries--studies in which an experimental group of mothers was allowed more close physical contact with neonates than is routinely practiced in the sample hospitals. As early as the second post-partum day, the experimental mothers handled their infants differently than did those in hospitals utilizing traditional practices. Post-delivery behavior of fathers as well as mothers who participate in a normal delivery of their neonate demonstrates patterned activities in the first relations with the neonate. Fathers, for example, have been observed in hovering, prolonged gazing, visual contact, pointing, face-to-face posturing, fingertip contact, and palming contact. According to McDonald (1978), these parental activities emerge in the same sequence for all subjects. All but face-to-face posturing and palming decreased significantly within a short amount of time. McDonald observes that this initial behavior may be a species characteristic of human fathers and may function to establish the father-to-newborn affectional bond. Neonate-parent interaction is common in isolated dyads, but this activity is often embedded in a three-person group and to focus on parent-infant dyad, whether mother-infant or father-infant, may be to ignore the fact that this dyad is commonly part of a larger grouping, namely the family, and that the family illicits specialization of roles and allocation of roles even when dealing with someone so young as a neonate. Outside of the breast-feeding experience, there appear to be more similarities than differences in the ways fathers and mothers

relate intimately to the neonate, if both are given the opportunity. There is some indication that fathers spend more of their time with neonates and infants in play activity than do mothers. Hence, infants might illicit different kinds of interaction with their fathers than with their mothers (Feiring and Lewis, 1978). Yet Belsky (1978) found that little was distinct in roles of mothers and fathers at least in middle-class families. Infants showed no preference for interaction with either father or mother. But Feiring and Lewis (1978: 227) found that under stress infants may prefer the mother, while in a free-play episode the same infants prefer the father. It is conceivable that infants also prefer a sibling for various kinds of interaction.

The presence of the other parent (a triad) can also affect a parent's interaction with an infant. Strong positive associations have been found between maternal ratings of support from the father and ratings of maternal involvement and responsiveness to the child. The father's warmth and affection help to support the mother and help her to be a more affective mother. By allaying the mother's doubts, anxieties, or frustrations and by making her feel more self-confident and secure, the father may enable the mother to be more responsive to the infant.

Mothers, when with their husbands, have been observed to be more likely to explore and smile at the infant than when they are alone. Also, the father's attitude toward the infant may be contagious. When mothers are with fathers they tend to touch their male infants more than their female infants. No sex of infant differences in touching have been found when the mother and the infant are alone.

Belsky (1979) found that wives were more influential in involving their husbands in parenting than vice versa. Husbands with wives who spoke frequently about their offspring were rated high in intensity of positive affect. It may be, however, that wives with husbands actively engaged in parenting often talk about their babies. Husbands and wives who engage in topics of conversation not related to the baby were relatively unlikely to be actively engaged in parenting. In some families, attention directed toward the baby provided the basis for pleasurable interaction between husband and wife.

Little attention has been paid to the addition of the sibling and the nature of dyadic and triadic interaction that the addition of a sibling creates.

Intimate/Affectionate Interaction in the Child-Parent Subgroup.

When we consider encounters involving infants, we think mostly in terms of dyadic encounters. But when the youngest family member is a child and not an infant, intimate family activity often involves all or most of the family members and is therefore nuclear-family activity

rather than dyadic activity. Davey and Paolucci (1980) found, in a study of 1,296 husband-wife-children families, that the family grouping most frequently interacting was that of mother and all the children. This grouping was closely followed by that of the whole family. Of the different participative subgroups possible, the least amount of interaction occurred between a parent and one or two of the children. In other words, interaction was not in dyads--the group type most conducive to intimacy. Most families participated in a variety of activities, most of which did not appear to be affectively intimate. Over 60% were social in nature--recreation, play, visiting. Social activities combined with eating accounted for 75% of the interaction. The next highest percentage, care of family members, included both physical care and activities such as helping with lessons and reading to children. Almost all of the shared activity took place in the home setting. There was an increase in family interaction on the weekends and during vacation. There was little evidence of shared time and space by family members in the execution of work related to household activities (See also Kalvesten and Ohman, 1979). One would conclude from this study that (1) there is not much affectionate interaction, and/or (2) that it is not observed and recorded.

One of the differences in child-parent interaction when contrasted with infant-parent interaction is that in infant-parent interaction there is much emphasis on the baby as being--that is someone that the parent can care for and enjoy, can fondle, cuddle, caress, suckle, attend and play with, while in child-parent interaction the emphasis is on the child's becoming--on providing training, teaching, disciplining of the child so that it will eventually be a mature, responsible adult. There is less emphasis on close intimacy and affection between child and parent than there is between infant and parent.

Society shows more interest in child socialization and child behavior than it does in infant socialization and infant behavior. Infants are of less interest to society than are children partly because, unlike infants, children enter the community as mobile individuals. Children who are not being brought up "properly" are "threats" to society--undisciplined, unruly, unmanageable, a bane to school teachers and to others. To have too many undisciplined children, it is reasoned, does not auger well for the future of the community or of society in general.

So the very nature of childhood is socially defined, socially constructed. Historically, the nature of childhood has been constructed according to three paradigms (Lee, 1980: 57-58): the property paradigm--children as the physical property of their parents; the protection paradigm--children as persons "held in trust" for a fixed period of time; and the personal paradigm--children seen as persons and citizens in their own right.

To be "modern" about the child in a democratic society involves "two conflicting themes: vindicating the claims of the child against tradition and authority, while at the same time trying to find rational sanction for limits on his freedom" (Wishy, 1968: vii).

If one were to project a model for child-parent intimacy and affection from what one sees in infant-parent interaction, one would be misled. For in infancy, interaction is close, intimate, permissive,

and highly sensual/sexual. Society's blueprint for child-parent intimate interaction is less clear and unequivocal than it is for infants. The child-parent relationship is to be a loving, nurturant one, but the loving way to treat a child is not necessarily intimate and essentially permissive. The loving way to treat a child--the social construct--is to make demands on the child, to apply close supervision, to use firm and sometimes harsh disciplinary measures, including physical punishment. In many homes and elementary schools, the "rod" is not spared in order that the child not be "spoiled" (Prescott, 1976: Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980).

Ego, as child, enters a stage of socially-proscribed sensual latency that begins in early childhood and lasts until the getting together and dating of the two genders in adolescence.

As was pointed out earlier, parents appear to be relaxed about the sensual/sexual behavior of Ego as an infant. Although the same sensual activity (genital play and masturbation) may be continued into the childhood stage, parent's reaction begins to change to a more restrictive or negative perspective. In the Cleveland study, eighty to ninety percent of the parents reported that they believed most children masturbate, for instance; but significantly fewer thought that it was acceptable behavior (Roberts et al, 1978). In a study of intimacy (touch) socialization of 4-year-olds, Blackman (1980) has shown that at least by the age of four permission to touch has been proscribed for children. Blackman found a number of distinctions as to what body parts could be touched in interacting with parents, where one can be kissed, and how the behavior varies by gender of child and gender of parent. There was not much child-parent touching at all, and what there was was not reciprocal, that is, not interactive.

Both genders of children consciously sense non-reciprocative touching patterns as part of their tactile communications system with their parents. For example, the kiss of the father on the female's neck is not to be reciprocated. Children are generally regarded as non-erotic beings in our society, but they are treated by their parents as though they have latent erotic sexual tendencies which must remain latent at least until adolescence. Society's message appears to be--children should be and in fact are asexual and to stimulate or reinforce any latent sexual tendencies is detrimental to their development as rational and responsible adults.

Blackman's findings support other observations about the touching patterns (Jourard, 1966, 1968). It is the practice to move one's offspring as rapidly as possible from a proximal, analogic mode of infant-parent interaction (involving physical contact--touching, holding, caressing) to a distal and digital mode of interaction (one in which interaction can be performed at a distance--looking at, smiling, vocalizing to).

Analogic or non-verbal communication, the conversation that has been characterized by communication theorists as precisely concerned with matters of relationship--love, respect, dependency, is replaced by digital (verbal) communication--communication that can be carried on without the interacting parties being physically close to each other. Of course a message can be both analogic and digital. A message between

child and parent conveying certain obvious information on a verbal (content) level would be, "Come to me and I will give you a hug." This message also serves to define the relationship between the person making the statement and the person to whom it is made. That is, the parent's metamessage may be, "Come to me and I will give you a hug (the stated content message), because I am your parent and you have the right to experience my tenderness and concern for you (the unspoken relational message)." Relational messages are more characteristic of infant-parent than child-parent interaction, however. Children are socialized away from body contact with self as well as with others (Lewis, 1972). According to Prescott (1976), the child-rearing climate is one of weaning before age two, consistent positive reinforcement of self reliance and achivement, the encouragement of male physical aggression, lower status for the female child, the use of supernatural forces to elicit moral behavior, and culturally sanctioned physical violence in disciplining children. All the children in the Blackman sample appeared to be products of these child-rearing characteristics of our society. Non-reciprocity of intimacy and affection, or the "blocked" response, was the essence of their emotional experience. The Blackman data gives impressive support to the stereotype of a patriarchal social organization which condones a certain amount of physical violence directed at children but is equivocal about condoning close reciprocal child-parent intimacy and affection. Many young adults remember their mother's restricted expressiveness—asexual, sexual repressive, or even sexually punitive. Finkelhor (1980) found this to be characteristic of girls who had been sexually victimized in their childhood. Father may have been perceived as "sexually dangerous," but mother's sexuality was barely perceived at all. Mothers were perceived by their children as holding a greater number of sexually repressive attitudes than fathers and were over twice as likely as fathers to punish their daughters for masturbating, playing sex games, or asking sex questions.

Beyond the age of infancy, it became quite apparent that parents held gender-specific attitudes about intimacy and affectionate relationships with their children in the Cleveland study. "Too much" touching, especially among boys, caused discomfort for many parents (Roberts, et al, 1978: 26-33). The male macho image and the fear of homosexuality inhibits sons in many families from openly-shared affection especially with their fathers. Sons, imitating their fathers, expressed noticeably less physical affection for friends and relatives as well. Appropriate behavior for men in showing their affection toward one another involves a hand shake, a punch on the arm, or a pat on the back. Some parents in the Cleveland study reported that they would like their sons to be able to experience and express a fuller range of feelings, including affection, intimacy, and vulnerability. Their commitment to this espoused value appeared to be tenuous and ambiguous, however. The majority of fathers were not modeling the kinds of behavior they said they would like their sons to be able to exhibit. In many ways parents refused to model intimacy and affection for their children. Many parents, particularly mothers, worried that the behavior of their husbands made it difficult for their children to view regular expressions of affection as appropriate to both men and women (Roberts, et al, 1978: 30).

Ninety percent of the fathers surveyed reported that they wanted to communicate to their child that it was acceptable for men to show emotion--"It is good for men to cry." But most did not themselves express their feelings through tears.

Parents experience conflict over how to find a balance between what they believe and what they want their children to believe about intimacy and affection. Equivocal social messages and parental uncertainty, or lack of clarity about their own beliefs, contribute to communication problems. Few Cleveland parents had ever discussed any aspect of erotic activity with their children, for instance (Roberts, et al, 1978: 55). In talking about the most important reasons for educating a child about sexuality, only about 10% replied that it is to help the child "enjoy his or her sexuality" when grown up (Roberts, et al, 1978: 87). Two-thirds of the Cleveland mothers and about one-half of the fathers said their child was the one who usually took the initiative in raising sexual issues for discussion. Hence, the level of conversation about sexuality in most homes would appear to depend upon the degree of inquisitiveness and sophistication of the child. This may say something about the general level of sophistication of sex discussion in the home. If there was an answer to a child's question, it was the mother who answered. Sexuality was assumed by both mothers and fathers as a women's issue, and sexual learning as a mother's responsibility. In many homes the father was not even aware of conversations that occur or what was being communicated to the child about sexuality. Some mothers did not mention to their husbands that a conversation had occurred or the nature of its content and showed no great desire to have the husband present during such discussions (Roberts, et al: 72-73).

Child-parent relations are also clearly more heavily circumscribed by norms and hence farther along the continuum toward objective role relationships rather than subjective emotional interaction (Douvan, 1977: 18). Child-parent intimate interaction is made more difficult and proscribed than is true in infancy because the parent now represents the normative structure of authority. It is argued that maturation requires that the attachment of infant-parent intimacy must be followed by growing independence during childhood and adolescence. Attachment prolonged will produce habits of sensual interaction that are to be left in infancy or at least not to be engaged in again until the dating and marriage experiences.

What are the prospects that child-parent intimacy will unintentionally (or intentionally) become eroticized given the restrictions we have already discussed? Because of interactive opportunity, hence high emotional access to each other, the prospects are still high and the consequences can range on a continuum from good to bad (Bagley, 1969; Rosenfeld, 1976; Parsons, 1954; Rorty, 1972; Bender and Blau, 1937; Finkelhor, 1979). Many things could occasion a child-parent erotic encounter getting "out of hand." Gelles and Straus (1979) in discussing intra-individual theories of violence label one theory of violence clockwork-orange theory

referring to violence against another family member the causes of which are attributed to boredom, the urge to seek thrills, or excessive reciprocity, wherein there is such absence of stress and tension because of excessive reciprocity in roles or lack of resistance in the younger member, that it leads to frustration and the adult commits violent acts as an attempt to "stir things up."

The term seduction is sometimes used in referring to a pathological parental tempting of the child. Unconsciously in the guise of tenderness, or consciously in jostling passion, the parent imposes upon the young child an adult form of sexuality inappropriate to the child's age (Liten, et al., in Rosenfeld, 1967).

In the early 1960's, Cormier and colleagues (1962) conceptualized incest as a symptom of severe family dysfunction, rather than etiological of a certain personal disorder or of a particular personality (See also Lustig et al, 1976). The express purpose of this school was to combine individual and family dynamics in understanding sex and intimacy. The families they studied were of the endogamic variety. According to their interpretation, people in endogomous incestuous families have had long and painful experience with deprivation and separation. As a result, family members are far less concerned with community standards than with intense fears of abandonment and with attempts to obtain minimal nurturance. The family's energies are devoted to staying together at all costs. In an endogomous family, incest may be seen as less reprehensible and threatening than adultery, since incest involves people already familiar with each other, while adultery involves outsiders. In other words, the family culture--in this case the family sexual culture--is supportive of incestuous behavior. In the presence of a parent's sexual estrangement, all family members are reassured by incest, reassurance that is vital to the presence of intense separation fears.

Finklehor (1978: 47) in concentrating only on the sexual dimension of family intimacy and affection, divided families into sex positive and sex negative, and high-sexualized and low-sexualized. Family sexuality has at least three dimensions, according to Finklehor: a family's attitude toward sexuality (family culture), the actual sexualization of family relationships, and the family's respect for personal sexual boundaries. Family predispositions can prompt positive or negative attitudes toward family sexuality. According to Finkelhor, in sex-positive families, children receive accurate information about sex, are given positive attitudes about their bodies, and are shown physical affection. In sex-negative families, sex and discussions about sex are loaded with anxiety and taboos. In highly-sexed families, members use one another as objects to their sexual role-playing. Each member tries to test out powers of attractiveness and adequacy on the others. Low-sexualized families discourage sexual role-playing and posturing from occurring inside the family. One interpretation of clear boundaries is that the privacy of individual family members is respected. In such families, there is apt to be a clear differentiation of sex roles between adults and children. In families with poor personal boundaries, this is not the case. Family members intrude upon one another,

and adult sexuality is not clearly distinguished from child sexual behavior. Incestuous families appear to be highly sexualized with poorly demarcated sexual boundaries. Family members posture sexual behavior towards one another, and the limitations are not clear enough to keep member's fantasies from spilling over into reality. Such families can either be of the sex-positive or sex-negative type. In sex-negative families the sexualized family relationship is carried in a covert way as a kind of rebellious undertone to the general culture's overt taboos and moralistic outlook on sex. In sex-positive families, sexualized relationships are much more visible and often enjoyed.

Weinberg (1955)and Kantor and Lehr (1976: 146) in their typing of families describe a family they call a random-type family. In this type of family an exploratory intimacy is pursued, emotions are unlimited, wander, and are characterized by passion. The random-affect mandate is to raise experience to levels of originality and inspiration. This type of family is loosely organized with sexual relationships of all types permitted with few restrictions, hence it is often incestuous.

Intimacy at ecstatic and hypnotic levels is certainly possible in erotically-charged child-parent encounters, though physical involvement to the point of coitus or attempted coitus is not the common outcome. Other kinds of sexual stimulation, such as fondling, caressing, and masturbating are more common. Most of the reported incestuous experiences do not involve physical force either, though the parent is physically capable of such force (Constantine, 1980: 163; Gebhard, 1965). In their work with sexually-misused children within a hospital setting, Rosenfeld and colleagues (1976) found that most of the children they saw had suffered no apprent physical harm. In the prepubertal child, the misuse involved genital activities such as masturbation, fondling, kissing, or stroking. Coitus was rarely attempted, and the adult rarely found the experience orgasmic.

Behaviors characterized as "seductive" are sexually stimulating yet rarely involve genital contact, hence it is difficult to judge if the activity is "normal" or "inappropriate" (Rosenfeld, 1976: 10). Sociologically speaking, child-parent incestuous relationships are seen as distortions of social roles, and the adult, more fully socialized into socially-proper social roles, is the one usually responsible for the distortion (Summit and Kryso, 1978: 242-243). The child may not clearly understand the socially-proper roles and is not the family member who as authority figure represents, interprets, and enforces the general normative structure of the society. There are cases in which the child not only participates willingly in erotic encounters but actually appears to initiate them (Constantine, 1980: 162). There are perhaps families in every society and certainly in the USA who embrace child-child and child-parent family norms distinctly tolerant of erotic and sexual intimacy (Summit and Kryso, 1978: 248). One can assume, given what we know about infant and child capacity, willingness, and the importance of socialization, that the consequences of incest in such families might be less negative (or more positive) than it would be if it occurred in a traditional family(Constantine, 1980: 166; Yorukoglu and Kempf, 1966).

Analytically, physical intimacy in infant-parent interaction and in child-parent interaction can be placed on a continuum.

Deprivation of Intimacy	"Optimum" Child Care	"Optimum" Infant Care	Excessive Intimacy
maternal deprivation	rational	eroticized	seduction
sexual neglect	distal mode	proximate mode	sexual misuse
	digital communication	analogic communication	sexual abuse
			incest

At one end of the continuum of physical intimacy, Ego is denied the minimal intimacy required for optimal physical, psychological and social development--sometimes referred to as maternal deprivation or sexual neglect. Moving along the intimacy scale we come to "optimum child care"— rational, distal mode, digital communication, and "optimum infant care"--eroticized, proximate mode, analogic communication. At the farthest end of the continuum intimacy is regarded socially as excessive and abhorrent--seduction, sexual misuse, sexual abuse, incest. Emotional intimacy is not easily scaled. What appears to differentiate more positive outcomes from the tragic ones at the "excessive intimacy" end of the continuum is the quality of the family relationships. Even incestuous relationships are imbedded in some kind of matrix of collaborative behavior (Constantine, 1977).

> What makes incest so destructive in those cases that have reached the attention of the law or helping professionals is not so much the fact of sexual contact between members of the same family but lack of knowledge and awareness by the child, the inability of members of the family to communicate openly their feelings and to discuss, in particular, the incest, and the lack of choice experienced by the child, whether due to coercion, force, or deception. Experiences which are not understood and cannot be talked about create tremendous anxiety and internal conflict. When these events are experienced as entirely beyond the control of the child the inner turmoil is worsened (Constantine,1977:3).

Intimate/Affectionate Interaction in the Sibling Subgroup.

Interactive opportunity and high emotional access are very important to the development of intimacy and affection within all family subgroups, not the least the sibling subgroup. Since siblings are likely to spend a major portion of their childhood time with each other, there is much interaction and potential for high emotional access, especially if they are close to one another in age. (This section draws heavily on two recent surveys of sibling-interaction research and literature: Tsukada, 1979; Adams, 1981.) If siblings have low emotional access they do not become truly important to each other. The amount as well as the quality of sibling interaction influences the amount of sentiment, and sentiment in turn influences the amount of interaction as bonds of loyalty, affection, and cooperation develop and strengthen the relationship (Schvaneveldt, and Ihinger, 1979). Where brothers and sisters are together for sleeping as well as playing there is both high physical and emotional access. Mutual masturbation has been reported as common among "needy" American children who sleep in close proximity in poorly

supervised settings (Brant and Tisza, 1977: 87). Also the anthropologist Fortes (1949: 251) observed a Talensi brother and sister, about 11 and 9 years respectively, engaged in what he interpreted as strong and overtly sexual activity, to give but two examples from the literature.

> (They) were quite naked, stood embracing each other, the boy with his legs around his sister's, and they twisted and wriggled about as if they were engaged in a mixture of orgiastic dance and wrestling match. They both were in a state of high excitement, panting and giggling and muttering to each other, with obvious sexual pleasure. They seemed oblivious of their surroundings. This game went on for almost 20 minutes, after which they separated and lolled back as if exhausted. The children were most attached to each other.

Tsukada came to the conclusion based on her review of the literature that "sibling relationships provide a child in most families with companionship, affection and understanding, and fulfill needs for peer group association" (1979: 232).

Sibling associations are informal, cohesive, and frank (Irish, 1964). They share an understanding of each other in the context of childhood capabilities and needs which would be difficult for adults to match.

Siblings when asked have more good than bad to say about their relationships with each other. Young Swedish children find siblings to be advantageous as playmates and as helpers. They keep one from being lonely (Dahl-Larsson and Lindstrom, 1979). If an outsider was mean to one of their siblings, the majority said that they would come to the aid of their sibling in one way or another. Cicrelli in a study of 140 mid-Westerners, most 30-60 years of age, found that the majority (68%) saw their sibling relationships as close or very close and only a few (5%) did not feel at all close (Adams, 1981); and over three-fourths (78%) said they got along well or very well with their siblings. In general, cohesiveness increased slightly with age. Gariqui found that the degree of affection between siblings at adolescence was second only to the child-mother tie (Tsukada, 1979). Siblings have been shown to be more helpful in developing feelings of self-confidence in each other than harmful in adversely affecting feeling of self-worth.

How do we equate such a benign picture of sibling relations with the recent national survey from which Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz report that violence appears to be built into the very structure of the family and that sibling violence is the most prevalent form of family violence (1980: 44, 77)? Both views of sibling relationships are likely correct. For example, in a small sample of Swedish children in which 88% said that they liked their sibling(s), talked a lot to each other (88%), did not tattle much on each other (85%), and did a lot of "fun" things together (81%), over half reported that they quarreled and/or fought with each other (Martinson, 1981). Also, children in Dahl-Larsson and Lindstrom's(1979) sample, though reporting that their siblings were good playmates and helpful, reported overwhelmingly (82%) that they sometimes or often were enemies. Parents are often aware of sibling rivalry and fighting because of the noise,

disruption, hurt, and need for parental intervention that appears to be required. What the role of the parent should be is problematic to parents and to observers. Dahl-Larsson and Lindstrom(1979) came to the conclusion that Swedish parents did not interfere enough. Levi and colleagues (1977) recommend "benign neglect," having demonstrated that siblings fight less after parents have received instruction in non-interference. A key factor in sibling rivalry is parental favoritism (Adams, 1981).

The gender of the siblings makes a difference. The highest level of violence occurs when a boy has only brothers (Straus, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980: 80). Sisters are more affectionate and friendly (Latts, 1966) and have more favorable feelings toward their siblings than do males (Bowerman and Dobash, 1974). In the long run also, it is women who keep brothers informed of the intimate aspects of each other's lives (Arkin, 1979).

The degree to which men develop intimate and meaningful relationships with women also appears to depend upon having a female sibling in the household. Sisters as peers, rather than mothers, appear to be the facilitators of male awareness and sensitivity to the female world.

Most of the research on siblings has not been on sibling interaction but on the effects of birth order on the personalities of each offspring. It has been quite conclusively demonstrated that there are differences between first-born and later-born, for instance (Markus, 1981). First-borns are relatively more likely to inhibit socially-disruptive feelings and to conform to the norms of their group. Jacobs and Moss (Markus, 1981) found that mothers spent less time with their second-borns in social, affectionate, and care-giving interaction (other than feeding), and as they grow up, second-borns appear to know that they have received less attention. Schall found that students at University of Göteborg reported much less parental control when they were 10 to 14 than did first-borns (Markus, 1981). The degree of sibling affect is also influenced by age and spacing of siblings. Siblings on the average feel closer to an older than a younger sibling (Bowerman and Dobash, 1974). Birth order is related to sexual attitudes and behavior of siblings; first-born siblings are more sexually conservative than are later-born siblings. Schvaneveldt and Ihinger (1979) explain this as a function of the increased openness of the family system to outside influences with each addition to the family.

Quality of parental interaction with each other and with their offspring also has a marked affect on siblings. Fervent sibling loyalty, that is, a deep bond between siblings, does not develop if parents are attentive (Adams, 1981). The critical factor in producing fervent loyalty is family collapse at the time when the children are growing up, with parents becoming actually or psychologically unavailable. In other words, intense sibling loyalty presupposes a kind of parental abandonment.

Society has not said much about intimacy in sibling interaction except for the absolute prohibition of incest. (Nor has sibling interaction captured the imagination or attention of family sociologists as we reported earlier.) Brothers and sisters, like boys and girls in general, are not expected to want to play intimately together for very many years, they are not expected to share common interests nor to especially enjoy each other's company. And they are socialized as though the above were true.

There are more societal norms proscribing the intimacy of males in general and son-father and brother-brother. Intimate, affectional interaction between males of any age or biological or social relationship are seen as potentially indicative of lack of self reliance and as potentially homosexual (Roberts, et al, 1978). Brothers may feel close and loving toward each other, but the emphasis of the male role on self-reliance and action leads brothers to define their closeness as loyalty to each other and the sharing of common experiences—hunting, playing, golf etc.—rather than as intimate and affectional friendship (Arkin, 1979).

It is socially accepted that girls are more feeling, emotional, more empathetic as well as more concerned for others than are boys (Staub, 1978: 19). Sister-sister intimacy is not seen as problematic when compared to brother-brother intimacy. Sisters also feel that their relationships are closer with each other than do brothers or cross-sex pairs (Adams, 1981).

If and when parents "interfere" in sibling activity, they bring a normative, authority figure on the scene, and authority figures are not conducive to interpersonal intimacy. The lack of normative responsibility in sibling relationships no doubt partially accounts for the fact that children feel significantly closer to siblings than to parents (Adams, 1981).

Bonds of loyalty between siblings (or on the other hand, the amount of competition between them) dictate the extent to which they engage in secret behavior on the one hand, or tattle to the parent authority figure on the other (Bank and Kahn, 1975). In other words, if the profit from interaction is rewarding, the sentiment produced by interaction tends to be positive and vice versa (Schvaneveldt and Ihinger, 1979).

Given factors such as interactive opportunity, physical and emotional access, liking for and loyalty to each other, secretiveness from the parental authority figure, and lack of experience and training in gender or opposite-sex roles (Roberts, et al, 1978), it is understandable that some of the sibling intimacy might involve erotic and sexual activity. Only one-half of Swedish children reported that they did not hug and kiss each other, while 27% said that they did. The other 23% chose to report their behavior under "Undecided" (Martinson, 1981). Approximately one-fourth said that they had a lot of secrets that they did not share with their parents, and the same proportion said they sometimes did things together that their parents would not approve of if they knew. They were not asked what these secret activities were, and there is no evidence by which we can determine whether or not they were of an erotic or sexual nature.

It appears to be the consensus of opinion that incest among brothers and sisters, though occurring more frequently than adolescent-parent incest, produces less psychic and social damage (Masters, 1963; Soothill, 1980). It is not regarded with the same gravity among professional counselors and therapists as was true some years earlier.

Soothill (1980) reports that in England the number of cases of brother-sister incest reported to police has gone down in recent years. Crime in general and adolescent-parent incest has not gone down, thus Soothill attributes the difference not to a lower incidence of sibling incest but to less negative reaction on the part of professionals.

Siblings who have a strong sense of loyalty to each other appear to have a spirit of cooperation regarding their sex experiences. Even though the sexual experiences in question were non-familial, Childers (1936: 446) reported that talks with the children revealed a good deal of such conniving.

In preliminary tabulation from an ongoing study of adolescent sexuality, Lewin (1980) reports a negative relationship between number of siblings in the home and coital experience outside the home. Those who had two or more siblings were the least coitally active outside the home. We do not know if they were more coitally active inside the home. We do not know since the adolescents in the sample were not asked about sibling incest or other family sexual experience. Reiss (1976: 344) found the younger sibling to be more sexually permissive than the older and suggests that the presence of an older sibling may influence the younger siblings greater permissiveness both in attitudes and behavior

It might also be reasonable to attribute greater sexual permisiveness of the younger child to his/her sexual experiences with older siblings (Martinson, 1973).

Kahn reports that siblings are not likely to be close as adults when sibling incest has occurred during the early years (Adams, 1980). On the other hand, but not directly supporting or refuting Kahn, Finkelhor(1980) found that women who had been involved in sibling incest were more sexually active than those reporting no childhood sexual experiences. Women who said sexual relations with siblings had been positive had significantly elevated sexual esteem scores as well. In a review of all major studies, Constantine (1980) concluded that there appears to be no inevitable or instinctual reaction to the emotional experience of incest. The nature of the sentiment between brother and sister may be decisive in their personal evaluations of their incestuous encounters.

One of the main thesis of a forthcoming book on sibling relationships by Bank and Kahn is that siblings are becoming more and more dependent upon one another because of the attrition in family size (Adams, 1981). Decreased family size also limits the opportunities for sibling interaction, of course. Yet in the United States, 80% of children grow up having brothers and sisters (Schvaneveldt and Ihinger, 1979). And though sibling interaction may be numerically less possible, reduction in family size does not necessarily mean less intimacy. In some respects at least there appears to be slightly more sibling closeness in two-child than in larger families (Bowerman and Dobash, 1974).

Intimate/Affectionate Interaction in the Adolescent-Parent Subgroup.

Because of lack of time and space, as well as lack of data, the section on intimacy and affection in the adolescent-parent family subgroup is not developed in this paper. Most of the limited literature on adolescent parent intimacy is on negative affect, particularly daughter-father incest.

Intimate/Affectionate Interaction in Adolescent Dating Relationships.

Dating has two primary functions in American society: companionship and recreation, or fun, and mate selection. Socio-cultural norms regarding dating intimacy and affection are romantic and idealistic. Only persons who are "in love" should marry, and young persons should determine whether or not they are in love with each other through intimate and affectionate dyadic experiences. It is expected that the socio-culturally proscribed sensual/sexual latency, established at least by age 4, shall now come to an end--what had been latent shall now be manifest. Little attention is given problems or inadequacies that may have resulted from 15 to 20 years of inhibiting tender and erotic feelings. Society takes a biological rather than a social perspective on interpersonal sensual/sexual ability, subscribing to the myth (Dornbusch, 1981) that the sex drive that supposedly emerges at puberty, particularly in the male, easily overcomes any reticence or socially-induced inadequacies resulting from socio-sexual latency. American society has not solved the problem that dating intimate-affectional patterns engaged in by inexperienced youth eventuate in large numbers of unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and births, for instance.

The research literature on intimate-affectional dating behavior is extensive with greatest attention given to sexual intercourse. Other kinds of social, psychological, and physical interaction receive much less attention.

The sociology of dating intimacy and affection is not developed in this paper.

Intimate/Affectionate Interaction in Marriage.

Society's messages related to marital intimacy and affection are relatively clear and unequivocal. Love is the reason par excellence for marrying (Martinson, 1960), marriage is to be a dyadic relationship characterized by love, companionship, tenderness, nurturance, and passionate eroticism. If it does not prove to be so, or if it does not continue to be so, society frees the partners to terminate that marriage, and each partner is free to try again with a different partner if so desired.

A fault with the societal model of marriage intimacy and affection is that it may be idealistic, unrealistic, unrealizable, perhaps even undesirable. Romantic love makes excessive intimate/affectional demands. For couples to be "head over heals" in love at all times calls for states of euphoria that may not be humanly possible.

For those who want the intimacy and affection that marriage is expected to offer, but are unable to cope with the demands (likely due in part to the long period of socio-sexual latency), society provides sensate-focus, pleasuring, pre-orgasmic, and other corrective therapy for those who want it and can afford it.

To say that societal expectations are idealistic is not to deny that the married pair is of singular importance in setting the tone for intimate/affectional interaction in all of the other family subgroups whether the married couple desires to model such behavior or not. Bowen (1960), for example, sees the marital relationship as so singularly important in normalizing family relations that in therapy he prefers to treat only the parents even when it is a child in the family who is sick and is the patient. The marriage relationship is a foundation upon which later relationships involving children born to the marriage are built. Also, family disorganization and disillusion is threatened if there are serious conflicts between marriage partners (Lowman, 1980).

There is a relatively extensive research literature on marital intimacy and affection. That literature is important, and may even serve as a model, in developing an integrated sociology of family intimacy and affection. It is not dealt with in this paper, however.

CONCLUSION.

This is a working paper and as such it remains open-ended. The experience of assembling the empirical data and interpreting it by utilizing a number of related concepts has answered the primary question of the paper. That is, an integrated sociology of positive family affect embracing interaction in the nuclear family and in all of its major subgroupings is possible.

The paper does not present a formally defined set of theoretical propositions nor even a conceptual framework as such. The formulation of a conceptual framework and the formulation of specific propositions and hypotheses are now in order.

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